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Congress Should Air Cuban Invasion

The charge of retired Air Force Col. Fred D. Stevens that he was "muzzled" by a White House aide after the ill-fated Cuban invasion of last April, reported by Latin America Editor Hal Hendrix in this newspaper yesterday, should be investigated by a proper committee of Congress.

There appears to be a strong likelihood that Congress will look into all the circumstances surrounding the invasion planning and the part which federal agencies may have played.

Col. Stevens says he was stopped from talking about the invasion at a meeting of U. S. air attaches in Panama. He had been an attache in Havana and after the break in relations with the Castro government headed an Air Force mission office here.

We printed Col. Stevens' story as a worthwhile piece of news, but do not necessarily subscribe to his opinions.

He blames Richard N. Goodwin, then a White House aide, now a deputy assistant secretary of state, for the "muzzling."

It is entirely possible Mr. Goodwin was acting under orders at a time when the Kennedy Administration

was being blamed for what happened. Col. Stevens' position is that he should have been allowed to tell other attaches about the invasion because they might face similar situations to the Cuban one in their assignments. We question whether such a political decision should be made at the military level.

Col. Stevens has sent copies of his charges to Sen. George Smathers of Florida and Sen. Barry Goldwater of Arizona.

We believe that the Bahia de Cochinos debacle should be aired under the proper auspices. If, as charged, the invasion by Cuban refugees was planned and directed by the Central Intelligence Agency, responsibility for the failure should be fixed in that agency. If higher policy decisions were faulty, we should know who made them.

We don't think this is a partisan matter. Evidently the planning was begun in the Eisenhower Administration and the project was inherited by the Kennedy Administration. Where the bungling, if any, occurred should be determined.